

Dear Members of the Public Health Committee,

I am writing to let you know that as your constituent and a CT resident, I strongly favor HB 6519 and the labeling of GMO foods in our state.

Throughout my childhood and early adult years, I was healthy and vibrant like everyone else in my family. I always followed a seemingly nutritious diet, exercised and took an interest in taking good care of myself. Then, in the late 1990's after having a serious reaction every time I consumed even a small amount of dairy products, I was no longer able to eat any dairy products. This came as a surprise since no one in my family ever had a reaction like this to dairy or any food. Then, in 2001, at 34 years old, I was diagnosed with an autoimmune disease and doctors were surprised at how depleted my body was of nutrients, despite my seemingly healthy diet. After several years of treatment, I stabilized until 2006 when I was finally diagnosed with sensitivity to gluten after suffering with extreme symptoms for a long time. Having learned about GMO's only a few months ago and how they were put into our food supply in 1996 without our permission or awareness, I now believe they had a significant influence on my health.

I am outraged that our government would allow some large corporations to risk the health of our citizens without any in-depth long-term studies AND complete disclosure. It is baffling to me that citizens like myself must now be having to 'fight' for labeling laws of GMO's when 63 developed nations either ban these ingredients or require labeling. After learning about GMO's and their apparent health risks, I knew right away that I would choose to avoid them for my family and myself. After cleaning out my kitchen cabinets and throwing away a lot of food, I started buying & eating all organic and I feel significantly better.

If foods are labeled, it will certainly make it easier to avoid these controversial ingredients for those of us who choose to do so. Personally, I don't think GMO's belong anywhere in our food supply. It just doesn't make any sense to use a process that completely defies nature, contaminates crops with high levels of pesticides and include these ingredients in almost all processed foods... how could this possibly be safe and not harmful over the long term? Given the health issues we are now facing in our country, it is mind boggling to me that our federal government doesn't support and incentivize organic sustainable farming rather than genetic engineering, pesticides and unhealthy processed foods. The only reason to possibly support big biotech companies and big food companies who put chemicals into our food must be for the purpose of profits and politics.

I not only urge each of you to support this bill yourselves, I ask you to please encourage your fellow representatives to support this bill. As citizens, we have a right to know what is in our food and to make the choice of what we want to eat, especially if the ingredients could possibly be harmful.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Regards,

Christine O'Day